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Elizabeth:

Here is the "follow-up"



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'No Oversight' in Shunning of CIA---Fulbright

BY JOHN H. AVERILL
Times Staff Writer

WASHINGTON—Sen. J. William Fulbright (D-Ark.) said Friday it "was not an oversight" that the Administration failed to ask the Central Intelligence Agency whether prisoners were present before the U.S. raid on Son Tay last month.

"One of the disturbing aspects of the mission," Fulbright said, "was that it was undertaken in concert with a number of other actions which many would interpret as an escalation of the war, calling into question this Administration's intentions."

"I refer to the air strikes on targets near Son Tay, which the secretary of defense originally denied, and the subsequent bombing in the southern parts of North Vietnam."

Fulbright's remarks were contained in a statement he had planned to read in the Senate Friday. When the Senate adjourned while the remarks were in preparation, he inserted them instead into the Congressional Record.

Same Information

The remarks by the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee came a day after The Times disclosed that the Administration gave the go-ahead for the Son Tay raid without consulting the CIA.

Fulbright, in an interview, said he had earlier established the same information independently. The White House said Thursday, however, that there was "full coordination and discussion" among all interested agencies of government including the CIA in planning the raid.

"I verified on my own," he said, "that the CIA was not consulted in this matter other than that early the agency supplied information on the camp's facilities."

Fulbright said this "raises very serious question about the motives of the raid—whether it indicates a change of policy, perhaps a renewal of air activity over North Vietnam."

In his statement, Fulbright put it this way:

"It has become clear beyond any doubt whatsoever that the Central Intelligence Agency was not consulted, nor its advice requested on the subject to the presence of American prisoners at the Son Tay prison at the time of the raid or during several weeks preceding the raid."

'Not Oversight'

"Months before the raid, the CIA supplied the Pentagon officials a description of the physical characteristics of the prison but not about the presence of prisoners. Obviously the failure to ask the CIA about the prisoners' presence was not an oversight."

Along with his statement, Fulbright inserted in the Congressional Record copies of Times stories on the Son Tay raid from Washington, Saigon and Eglin Air Force Base, Fla., as well as related stories from other publications.

Fulbright also inserted in the record copies of several letters harshly denouncing him for his earlier criticism of the Son Tay raid.

"I regret that this kind of attitude exists on an issue about which all of us are greatly concerned. I don't believe it in any way contributes to the solution of the problem," Fulbright said.

Fulbright recalled that he had made repeated efforts over the years to obtain information on the American POWs and to effect their release.

"I must state," he said, "that I remain unconvinced that the commando raid on Son Tay was the best way to bring about the release of all the prisoners, despite the courageous and bold action of those who took part."

"The only sure way to get the prisoners home, Fulbright said, "is to negotiate a settlement of the war, just as the French did 15 years ago."